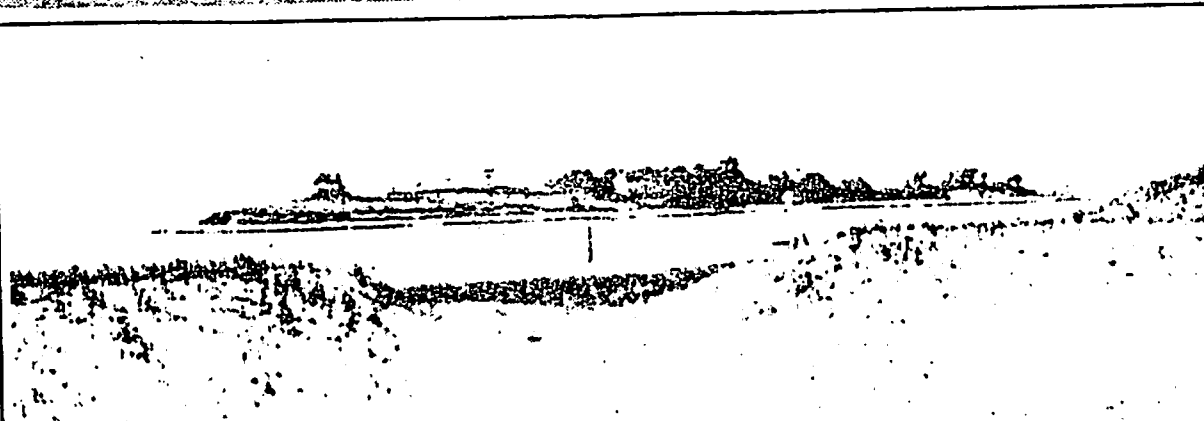


Then and now



Clark's Island — 1906

On Dec. 18, 1620, 18 men in the shallop from the Mayflower reached Clark's Island in a storm of rain and snow. On Dec. 10, the Sabbath day, they rested, and on the following day, they sounded the harbor and found it suitable for shipping.

From Pulpit Rock on this island, says the legend, the Pilgrims' first sermon was preached.

It was not until Feb. 23, 1687, that a Mr. Knight, Governor-in-Chief of New England, granted the island, containing 86 acres, to Nathaniel Clark. In 1689, a committee in Plymouth was formed and took over Clark's Island from Clark.

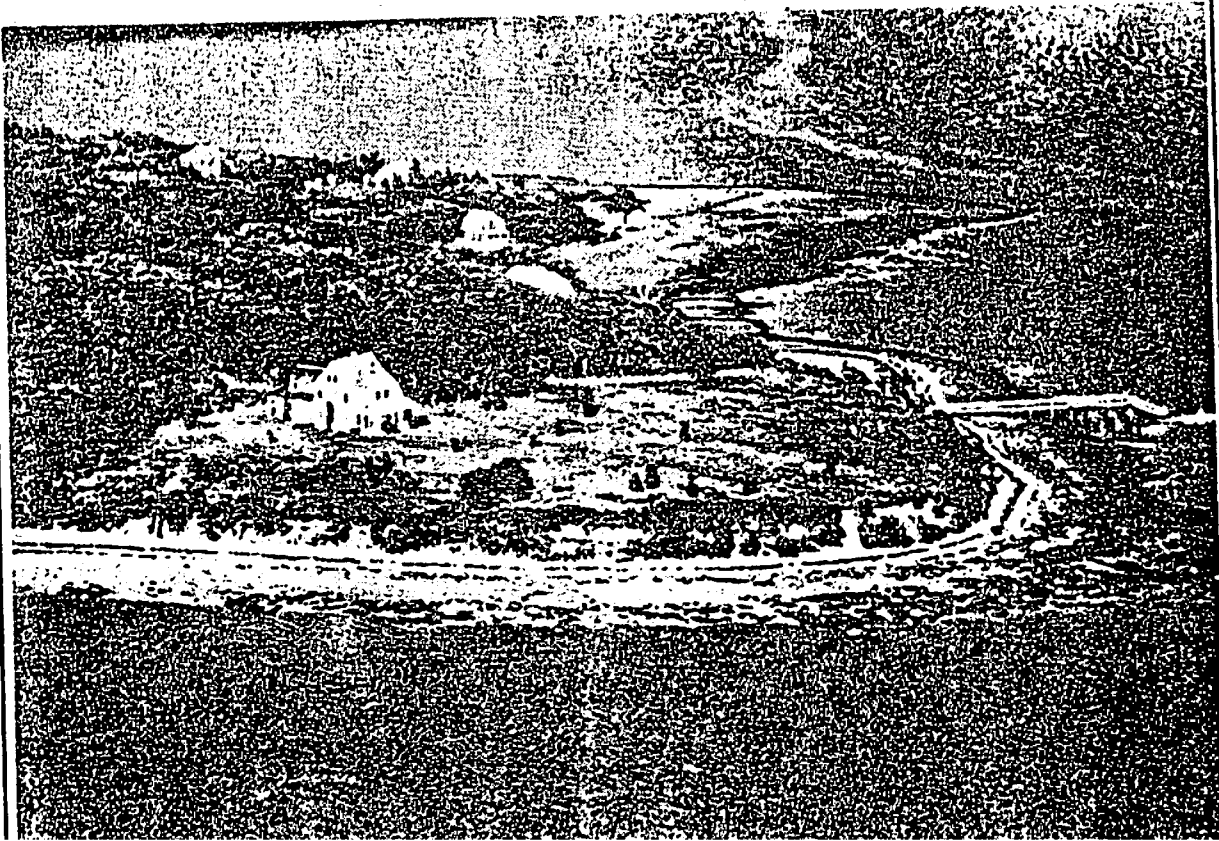
In 1690, it was sold to Samuel Lucas, Elkanah Watson and George Morton, and several years later, it went into the hands of the Watson family. It was a source of revenue to Plymouth for timber and there was a salt works there.

The Watsons cleared the land and raised hay and were noted for their turnips. There were four who owned the island, Mort, Ed, Jim and Nathaniel Watson, all boat builders. The island was deeded to the Watsons.

Lawrence Geller, former executive director of the Pilgrim Society, wrote, "The Watsons own-

ed and skippered some of the finest fishing vessels out of the "T" Wharf. One December day, Al and John were anchored in Saquish with a northwest wind blowing. They both had a trip of fish and started for Boston. They reached Minot's and tacked their vessel, *Mary Emerson*. She had so much ice on the portside, the rill was in the water. They had to shorten sail and work up to Boston. They were lucky it did not capsize."

In this photo is seen the Watson estate at the tip end of the island. The original farmhouse was built in 1690. (Photo loaned by Maggie Mills, who wrote the text.)



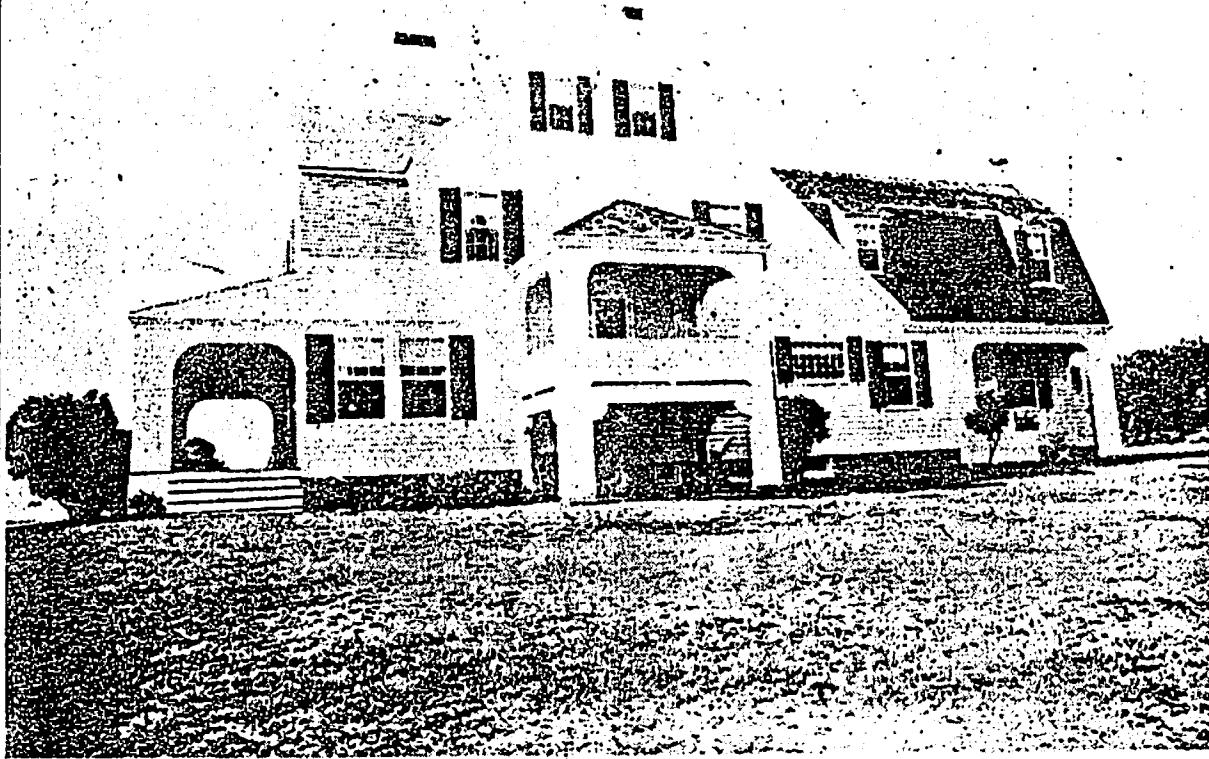
ds, and
filled to
ganiza-
han any
n years
involve
to the
ted peo-
cutives,
because
to see
town of

Clark's Island — 1976

The late Capt. Albert Franklin Pierce of Lincoln Street was a great teller of tales of the Gurnet, Saquish and Clark's Island. At the age of 92 in 1969, Pierce told Geller the story about his nephew, Arthur Hughes, who assisted caretaker Kendrickl Tribou.

"One night," Pierce said, "when they took the cows to the little pond for water, they saw two of the largest water snakes. Arthur got his gun and shot them. They were copper bellies and measured about four feet long. How did they ever get down there? I saw the

largest black (snake) in the little cemetery while picking blackberries. The Watsons raised a lot of hay, and had a baler in their barn to bale up the hay. I have seen the old cat boat piled up three tier high taking it to Plymouth." (Photo loaned by Maggie Mills, who wrote the text.)



Watson estate, Clark Island — 1975

In June, 1976, the realtors put up for sale the Watson estate on Clark's Island. Known as one of the prettiest parcels on the island, this was the same ground where Henry David Thoreau, Louisa May Alcott, and Harvard presidents Eliot and Lowell, in addition to other famous Americans, explored during their lifetime — so the story goes.

This estate occupies all of the southern end of the island. The owner in 1976 was Howard Watson, a member of the famous New England yachting and seafaring family. It had been in the Watson family for almost three centuries.

The 12-room Dutch Colonial house was designed in 1825 by Van Brunt and Hower, Boston architects for the scholar William Watson Goodwin, then head of Harvard's Greek department.

The main house consists of a living room and library, both with fireplaces; a dining room with built-in and hand-carved corner cupboard, a large kitchen, two pantries, a family room and two half-baths on the first floor. There are four master bedrooms and a maid's room with a separate staircase on the second floor; and two bedrooms on the third floor. Large

covered verandas run on three sides of the house.

There is a large storage basement and hot water and refrigeration services by bottle gas. On the shore, close to a new 120-foot dock is a boathouse converted into a guest house. The channel on the west side, adjacent to the property is ample for large yachts at any tide.

Present owners of the Watson estate are John W. and Susan S. Baker of West Acton who purchased the estate in 1979. (Photo loaned by Maggie Mills, who wrote the text.)

Have you sent your letter to the editor?